

Surface Transportation Board
Section of Environmental Analysis

DM&E Powder River Basin Expansion Project

**Public Meetings on
Draft Environmental Impact Statement**

AGENDA

- Team Introductions & Meeting Ground Rules
- Surface Transportation Board Role
- Cooperating Agency Roles
- Overview of Project and Environmental Review
- Public Comments

HOW TO SUBMIT WRITTEN COMMENTS

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT, PROGRAMMATIC AGREEMENT, AND BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Comment Deadline: January 5, 2001

For comments 5 or more pages, send original plus 10 copies. For comments less than 5 pages, send only the original.

Mailing Address:

Office of the Secretary
Case Control Unit
STB Finance Docket No. 33407
Surface Transportation Board
1925 K St., NW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Attn: Victoria Rutson
Environmental Project Manager
Environmental Filing

SECTION 404 PERMIT APPLICATION – SOUTH DAKOTA AND WYOMING

Comment Deadline: November 28, 2000

Mailing Address:

Mr. Jerry Folkers
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District
215 North 17th Street
Omaha, NE 68102-4978

SECTION 404 PERMIT APPLICATION – MINNESOTA

Comment Deadline: November 28, 2000

Mailing Address:

Mr. Tim Fell
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District
190 5th Street East
St. Paul, MN 55101-1638

PROPOSED FOREST SERVICE PLAN AMENDMENTS

Comment Deadline: January 5, 2001

Mailing Address:

Ms. Wendy Schmitzer
USFS Project Coordinator
Douglas Ranger District
2250 East Richards St.
Douglas, WY 82633

Email Address: wschmitzer@fs.fed.us

Over

HOW TO SIGN UP TO SPEAK

- If you wish to speak at this meeting but have not pre-registered, you may sign up at the front desk. Those speakers who have not pre-registered will be accommodated as time allows.
- The time available for each person to speak will be limited by the total number of people requesting to speak.
- The meeting facilitator will announce the time limit and call each speaker by name in the following order:
 - Federal elected officials
 - State elected officials
 - Pre-registered speakers in order of pre-registration
 - Those who signed up at this meeting to speak (Speakers who have not spoken at a previous meeting will be given priority).

MEETING GROUND RULES

- One speaker at a time
- Practice active listening
- Honor time limits
- Be concise
 - Summarize in your oral comments – provide detail in written comments
 - Avoid redundancies – use ‘ditto’ if you agree
- Respect others’ opinions

WRITTEN COMMENTS

- You may submit written comments at today’s meeting or by mail to the addresses on the reverse side.

Over

Additional comments: _____

Place
Stamp
Here

**Office of the Secretary
Case Control Unit
STB Finance Docket No. 33407
Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street, NW
Washington, DC 20423-0001**

**Attn: Victoria Rutson
Environmental Project Manager
Environmental Filing**

Hello,

You have reached the Surface Transportation Board's Section of Environmental Analysis hotline for the proposed Powder River Basin Expansion Project. This recording includes a brief description of the project, information on the status of the environmental review process and public meetings, and how to pre-register to speak at a public meeting. You will have an opportunity to leave a message at the end of this recording.

The Powder River Basin Expansion Project is a proposal by the Dakota, Minnesota, and Eastern Railroad Corporation (DM&E) to construct approximately 280 miles of new rail line in South Dakota and Wyoming and upgrade approximately 600 miles of existing rail line in South Dakota and Minnesota. The proposed Powder River Basin Project would allow DM&E to extend their existing system westward to access coal mines in the Powder River Basin of Wyoming.

On September 27, 2000, the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis, referred to as S-E-A, in coordination with 5 cooperating agencies, issued a draft Environmental Impact Statement, or Draft EIS, for the proposed project.

The cooperating agencies are the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation, and the U.S. Coast Guard.

If you did not receive a copy of the Draft EIS and would like to review a copy, please leave your name, address and telephone number at the end of this recording. Someone

will return your call with the name and address of the library closest to you that received a copy of the Draft EIS. You may also review the Draft EIS on the Board's website at www.stb.dot.gov.

S-E-A will be conducting 12 public meetings on the Draft EIS and the Section 404 Permit Applications that DME has filed with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The meetings will be held in the towns and at the times and locations as follows:

Douglas, Wyoming

Monday, October 30, 2000

6:00-10:00 p.m.

Best Western Douglas Inn

1450 Riverbend Drive

Newcastle, Wyoming

Wednesday, November 1, 2000

1:00-4:00 p.m. and 6:00-10:00 p.m.

The Fountain Inn

2 Fountain Plaza

Rapid City, South Dakota

Thursday, November 2, 2000

6:00-10:00 p.m.

Rushmore Plaza Civic Center

444 Mount Rushmore Road North

Pierre, South Dakota

Monday, November 13, 2000

1:00-4:00 p.m. and 6:00-10:00 p.m.

Best Western Kings Inn

200 South Pierre

Brookings, South Dakota

Tuesday, November 14, 2000

1:00-4:00 p.m. and 6:00-10:00 p.m.

Brookings Inn

2500 East 5th Street

Mankato, Minnesota

Wednesday, November 15, 2000

1:00-4:00 p.m. and 6:00-10:00 p.m.

Best Western Hotel and Restaurant

1111 Range Street

North Mankato

Rochester, Minnesota

Thursday, November 16, 2000

1:00-4:00 p.m. and 6:00-10:00 p.m.

Mayo Civic Center

30 Civic Center Drive South East

Please pre-register to speak at a meeting by leaving your name, telephone number, any group, business or agency affiliation if applicable, and the meeting at which you would like to speak. The deadline for pre-registration is October 20, 2000.

Each meeting will follow the same agenda. S-E-A will give a brief presentation after which those attending will have the opportunity to state their comments on the Draft EIS and/or the Section 404 Permit Applications. The time available for each person to speak at a meeting will be limited by the total number of people requesting to speak at that meeting. Persons will be called to speak in the order in which they pre-registered. Those wishing to speak but that did not pre-register will be accommodated at each meeting as time allows. Those wishing to speak at more than one meeting will also be accommodated as time allows and after all others have had an opportunity to participate.

As S-E-A would like to allow as many persons as possible to participate and given that there will be a limited amount of time at each meeting, all speakers are strongly encouraged to prepare summary oral comments and submit detailed comments in writing. S-E-A also encourages groups of individuals with similar comments to designate a representative to speak for them.

Please mail written comments to the following address:

Office of the Secretary

Case Control Unit

STB Finance Docket No. 33407

Surface Transportation Board

1925 K Street, NW

Washington, DC 20423-0001

Please write the following in the lower left-hand corner of the envelope:

Attention: Victoria Rutson

Environmental Project Manager

Environmental Filing.

Comments must be submitted by January 5, 2001. For comments over 5 pages, send an original plus 10 copies. For comments of 5 pages or less, the original alone may be submitted.

If you have further questions and would like to speak with a member of S-E-A's Powder River Basin Expansion Team, please clearly state your request or question, and leave your name, mailing address, and telephone number, including area code, after the beep.

Thank you for calling.

**SEA's Environmental Hotline
Dakota, Minnesota, and Eastern Railroad
Retrieval Form
1-877-404-3044**

Date: _____

Time: _____

Initials: _____

CALLER INFORMATION:

Name: _____ Telephone No. (____) _____

Title: _____

Agency: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

REASON FOR CALL:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Requested Draft Scope | <input type="checkbox"/> Requested Entire Final EIS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Requested Final Scope | <input type="checkbox"/> Requested Executive Summary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inquired about schedule deadlines | <input type="checkbox"/> Requested Entire DEIS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Requested specific info. for _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Requested a call back |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Registered DEIS Chapters _____ | |

FOLLOW-UP ACTION TAKEN:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Returned call | <input type="checkbox"/> Sent information requested |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other action taken | |

NOTES: _____

Map Request Form

Date: _____

Time: _____

Initials: _____

CALLER INFORMATION:

Name: _____ Telephone No. (____) _____

Title: _____

Agency: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

REASON FOR CALL:

- ☐ Requested a call back
- ☐ Request Map

FOLLOW-UP ACTION TAKEN:

- ☐ Returned call
- ☐ Other action taken
- ☐ Sent information requested

NOTES: _____



**Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001**

NEWS

FOR RELEASE:
Thursday, May 17, 2001
No. 01-22

Contact: Dennis Watson
(202) 565-1596
TDD/TDY 1 (800) 877-8339
www.stb.dot.gov

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD BEGINS FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT STATEMENT PREPARATION AFTER CLOSE OF PUBLIC-COMMENT
PERIOD AND PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF MORE THAN 8,500 COMMENTS
RECEIVED ON
“DAKOTA, MINNESOTA & EASTERN’S” PROPOSED
POWDER RIVER BASIN RAIL EXPANSION PROJECT**

Surface Transportation Board Chairman Linda J. Morgan announced today that the Board’s Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) has completed its initial review of comments submitted on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) for the Dakota, Minnesota and Eastern Railroad Corporation’s (DM&E) proposed Powder River Basin Expansion Project, and has begun preparation of a Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS). The period for submitting comments on the Draft EIS closed on March 6, 2001. So that SEA may focus its efforts on completing the environmental review process as quickly as possible, additional comments on the Draft EIS will not be accepted.

In accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act, on September 27, 2000, SEA, in coordination with five cooperating Federal agencies, issued a 5,000-page Draft EIS for the proposed project. SEA then conducted 12 public hearings on the Draft EIS and on wetland permit applications that DM&E had filed with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the project.

During the Draft EIS's public-comment period, SEA received over 8,500 submissions. Comments were submitted by federal, state, and local agencies; various interest groups; affected communities; Indian Tribes; and members of the public, largely from the States of Minnesota, South Dakota, and Wyoming, but also from locations throughout the United States. The majority of comments raised concerns involving:

- Mitigation of environmental harm, such as which mitigation measures should be required and who should be responsible for implementing mitigation measures.
- Adverse safety impacts, such as potential delays in emergency vehicle response times because of blocked rail-highway crossings and the safety of such crossings.
- Route alternatives, particularly those associated with proposals to bypass certain concerned communities in Minnesota and South Dakota.

In addition, the comments raised such issues as: potential impacts from train noise and vibration; quality of life issues from increased train traffic; potential impacts to air quality relating to coal dust and diesel emissions during train operations; changes in land use patterns from rail line construction and upgrades; possible effects from rail line construction and upgrades on wetlands and water quality; and potential impacts to Indian Tribes.

The Final EIS that SEA is now preparing will respond to the comments, and will include additional analysis, as appropriate, and SEA's final environmental mitigation recommendations to the Board. SEA anticipates issuing the Final EIS no later than late Fall of this year. While the Board has yet to make a final decision concerning the proposed DM&E project, pending completion of the environmental review process, it has already found that the Powder River Basin Project meets the transportation merits criteria of the ICC Termination Act. After consideration of the entire environmental record, which will include all public and agency comments, the Draft EIS, and the Final EIS, the Board will make a final decision in this case.

The Powder River Basin Expansion Project is DM&E's proposal to construct approximately 280 miles of new rail line in South Dakota and Wyoming and to upgrade approximately 600 miles of existing rail line in South Dakota and Minnesota. The project would allow DM&E to extend its existing system westward to access coal mines in the Powder River Basin of Wyoming. Interested parties may obtain additional information by calling the SEA toll-free Environmental Hotline at (877) 404-3044 or by visiting the Board's Website at www.stb.dot.gov.

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SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Washington, DC 20423

Section of Environmental Analysis

May 18, 2001

Dear Interested Party:

On behalf of the Surface Transportation Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA), I would like to thank you for your interest and participation in the environmental review process for the Dakota, Minnesota, & Eastern Railroad Corporation's (DM&E) proposed Powder River Basin Expansion Project. The period for submitting comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this proceeding closed on March 6, 2001 after being extended for 60 days at the request of many interested parties. So that we may focus our efforts on completing the environmental review process, we are not able to accept additional comments.

Approximately 8,500 comments were received from agencies, organizations, communities, Indian Tribes, and individuals, largely from the States of Minnesota, South Dakota, and Wyoming, but also from locations throughout the United States. We appreciate the time and effort of all who responded. SEA, in concert with our five cooperating agencies (Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation, and Coast Guard), is now considering the ideas, comments, and concerns expressed. The next step is preparing and releasing the Final EIS.

Many of the comments we received raised one or more of the following issues:

- Mitigation of environmental harm, such as which mitigation measures should be required and who should be responsible for implementing mitigation measures.
- Adverse safety impacts, such as potential delays in emergency vehicle response times because of blocked rail-highway crossings and the safety of such crossings.
- Route alternatives, particularly those associated with proposals to bypass certain concerned communities in Minnesota and South Dakota.

In addition to pointing out areas that could benefit by additional analysis or clarification, comments also raised many other topics, issues, and concerns. These include potential impacts from noise and vibration, socioeconomic effects, disruptions to transportation systems, changes in land use patterns, potential impacts to air quality relating to coal dust and diesel emissions during train operations, potential impacts to wetlands and water quality, and potential impacts to Indian Tribes.

The Final EIS that SEA is now preparing will respond to the comments, and will include additional analysis, as appropriate, and SEA's final environmental mitigation recommendations to the Board. SEA anticipates issuing the Final EIS no later than late Fall of this year. While the Board has yet to make a final decision concerning the proposed DM&E project, pending completion of the environmental review process, it has already found that the Powder River Basin Project meets the transportation merits criteria of the ICC Termination Act. After consideration of the entire environmental record, which will include all public and agency comments, the Draft EIS, and the Final EIS, the Board will make a final decision in this case.

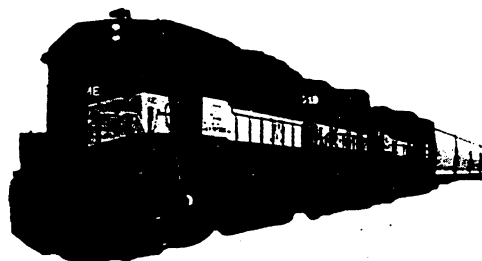
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DM&E Project Update!



Thank you again for your interest and participation. Again, please be aware that the comment period has closed, and we are not able to accept additional comments. We appreciate your concerns and are carefully considering them. If you have any additional questions regarding environmental issues or the environmental review process for the proposed DM&E Powder River Basin Expansion, please call SEA's toll-free Environmental Hotline at (877) 404-3044, or visit the Board's website at www.stb.dot.gov.

Sincerely,

Victoria Rutson
Project Manager
Section of Environmental Analysis